



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



OLD CRONIES VISIT STATE VETERANS HOME

Veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (MJFSVH) received a boost to their activities fund from the Old Cronies Motor Cycle Club.

Members of the Old Cronies visited the State Home recently and delivered hand-made wooden benches, religious ornaments for the chapel, custom artwork and a \$6,000 donation to the MJFSVH activities fund. This is the third annual trip by the Cronies and the third time they have gifted our veterans.

The Old Cronies Motor Cycle Club is a group of former servicemen and women and their families and friends, from northeastern South Dakota, who wanted to give back to veterans.

Brett Schaible of Bowdle, noted their visit to the Home is not just about the gifts they present; it's also about renewing the friendships they have made with the veterans at the Home.

This group is tied together by two strings – one that they love to ride and the other is their love for veterans.

"Without a doubt, it's groups like the Old Cronies reaching out to fellow South Dakota Veterans that really shows the true spirit of our state and our pledge to take care of our own," said Brad Richardson, Superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

"The Old Cronies are truly a special group of caring individuals and families that have reached out to our heroes and touch our hearts," said Richardson. "We are truly blessed for the difference they make in the lives of our South Dakota Veterans."

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SANFORD HEALTH OFFERING \$5,000 SCHOLARSHIP TO VETERANS

The Sanford Health is currently accepting applications for their Military and Veteran Scholarship. Any veteran, Guard/Reserve, or active duty military service member who has demonstrated leadership and commitment in his/her community should apply. The deadline to submit applications is Aug. 31.

Interested students should download and complete the application at: http://news.sanfordhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/019036-00674-FLYER-Military-Vets-Scholarship-Application-8_5x11.pdf.

To be eligible, applicants must be a veteran, guard/reserve or active-duty military service member and a full-time student pursuing a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree from an accredited U.S.-based institution of higher education.



THE FOLDED FLAG FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Although the deadline has passed, the Folded Flag Foundation also offers a scholarship that might be worth checking into.

Visit: <https://www.foldedflagfoundation.org/Apply> for more details on the scholarship and the application process.



THE
FOLDED FLAG
FOUNDATION

VA RELEASE STATE-LEVEL SUICIDE DATA

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released state-level veteran suicide data as a follow-up to its [2015 National Suicide Data Report](#), which was released on June 18.

Alongside the state data sheets, the VA also published the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, a strategic framework for the nation's collective efforts to prevent veteran suicide over the next decade.

The updated 2015 state data sheets offer an analysis of veteran suicide data by age, gender and suicide method for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Both the individual state data sheets and the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide underscore the fact that suicide remains an important national public health concern affecting both veterans and non-veterans in every state. The state data sheets serve as a critically important tool that helps the VA and its partners at the state and community levels design and execute the most effective suicide prevention strategies.

"The VA is working hard to prevent suicide among all veterans, including those who do not, and may not ever, use VA services and benefits," said Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "Our work is driven by data that inform our efforts and our partners' efforts to prevent suicide through a national public health approach."

Suicide is a complex public health issue. While there is no single explanation for disparities in suicide rates between states, differences in population size, health-care access, and firearm policy are relevant considerations. The interaction of these factors further highlights the need for a coordinated approach to suicide prevention that involves the broader community to support veterans before they reach a crisis point.

The National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide reflects VA's vision for a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention that involves different sectors working together to build effective networks of support, communication and care, reaching Veterans where they live and thrive. The VA is leading efforts nationwide to understand suicide risk factors, develop evidence-based strategies and identify and care for veterans who may be at risk for suicide.

"The National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide is more than a strategic plan — it's a call to action," said Dr. Carolyn Clancy, executive in charge of VA's Veterans Health Administration. "Only about half of the approximately 20 million veterans in the U.S. receive VA benefits or services. To end veteran suicide, we need organizations across sectors to adopt the strategy's framework and join us in delivering support to all veterans."

The updated 2015 state data sheets are available at:

https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/Suicide-Prevention-Data.asp.

Download the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/index.asp under 'Strategy and Education.'

VA SUICIDE DATA (CONTINUED)

Modeled after the [2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) and a complement to the [Department of Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#), the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) encompasses four interconnected strategic directions:

- Healthy and Empowered Veterans, Families, and Communities
- Clinical and Community Preventive Services
- Treatment, Recovery and Support Services
- Surveillance, Research and Evaluation.

“An example of the VA’s efforts include a ‘Mayors Challenge’ where we work in collaboration with 8 cities –teaching local stakeholders how to develop evidence based practices for suicide prevention strategies locally,” said Dr. Keita Franklin, VHA’s Suicide Prevention Program executive director. “We have made great strides in suicide prevention by expanding existing programs and launching new ones, but we are always looking for new, innovative ways to connect Veterans with support and care – and those efforts are guided by data.”

The VA and its partners are already putting this strategy into practice across a variety of initiatives. In recent months, the VA has undertaken substantial new efforts, including:

- [Expanding the Veterans Crisis Line](#)
- Creating new cross-sector partnerships
- Implementing the [Joint Action Plan for Supporting Veterans During Their Transition From Uniformed Service to Civilian Life](#)
- [Launching SAVE online suicide prevention training](#)

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, should call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year at 800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#), or send a text message to 838255.

Reporters covering this issue are strongly encouraged to visit [www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](#) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.



1ST BATTALION, 196TH REGIMENT CHANGES COMMAND

Lt. Col. Troy Ness, of Brookings, took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment from Lt. Col. Wyatt Hansen, of Spearfish, during a change of command ceremony at the Fort Meade parade field, June 23.

Ness, who has been a member of the National Guard for over 30 years, will now oversee the Fort Meade unit that Hansen has commanded since Sept. 2016.

"I am excited for this opportunity," said Ness. "It's a privilege to be involved in the leader development of future officers. My goal is to uphold the outstanding legacy of the OCS program and continue to raise the bar where we can."

As the commander of the 1/196th, Ness is now responsible for the planning, training and support of the battalion's accelerated officer candidate school program, the conduct of OCS at its eight subordinate companies, as well as the warrant officer candidate school.

Ness is employed at South Dakota State University as the Recruiting Operations Officer for the school's Army ROTC program. Hansen will attend the resident Army War College at Carlisle, Penn. starting in July.



A&W NATIONAL ROOT BEER FLOAT DAY

August 6th is National Root Beer Float Day, the one day every year when A&W celebrates their signature treat. A&W Root Beer and rich, creamy vanilla soft serve—it doesn't get much better than that. So stop in to any A&W Restaurant location all day on August 6th for a free small Root Beer Float no purchase necessary! Donations to the Disabled American Veterans encouraged. Cheers!



<https://www.awrestaurants.com/national-root-beer-float-day-2018>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jul 7—Veterans for Veterans Annual Poker Run—Mitchell Depot—1:00 pm (CT)
 Jul 11—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
 Jul 12—Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Cemetery Grand Opening—Sisseton—11:00 am (CT)
 Jul 13 —VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Education Classroom—Fort Meade—10:00 am (MT)
 Jul 14—VVA SD State Council Third Quarter Meeting—Pierre Post 8 American Legion—11:00 am (CT)
 Jul 14-17—DAV National Convention—Reno, NV
 Jul 21-25—VFW National Convention—Kansas City, MO
 Jul 26—VABHHCS Veterans Town Hall—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre 11:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)
 Aug 20-24—SDDVA Benefits School—Ramkota—Pierre
 Aug 24-30—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN
 Aug 30—Veterans Day at the State Fair
 Sept 3—Labor Day (state offices closed)
 Sept 11—Improving Veterans Care Conference—BHSU (4300 Cheyenne Boulevard) - Rapid City
 Sept 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
 Sept 21—7th Annual POW/MIA Program—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park (1021 W. Bailey Street) 6:30 pm (CT)
 Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Soldiers and Sailors Building—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)
 Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)



Save *the* Date

**Improving
Veterans Care
Conference**



This mental health summit delivers important information that will assist healthcare providers and other professionals as they work to support families of Veterans and our Citizen Soldiers in South Dakota.

This one-day mental health summit will be held in Rapid City.

Black Hills State University Center
4300 Cheyenne Boulevard
Rapid City, South Dakota

★ Tuesday
September 11, 2018

Focus:
 Military Sexual Trauma
 Opioid Addiction & Treatment
 Suicide Prevention

To register & for details contact Northeast SD AHEC:
www.nesdahec.org or call (605)229-8305








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